

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 01968 01 OF 02 282339Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----290006Z 038032 /14
O 282308Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4148

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 1968

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, PINS, ES
SUBJECT: SAN SALVADOR AS IDB MEETING SITE

REFS: (A) STATE 093806, (B) SAN SALVADOR 1921, (C) SAN SALVADOR 1852

1. THE EMBASSY APPRECIATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE SUITABILITY OF SAN SALVADOR AS THE SITE OF THE MAY IDB MEETING, SINCE WE SHARE MANY OF THE CONCERNS IMPLICIT IN THE QUESTIONS POSED REFTEL (A). BEFORE OFFERING OUR ASSESSMENT IN THE THREE SPECIFIC AREAS - SECURITY, ACCOMMODATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS - WE WOULD SET THE STAGE WITH SEVERAL FACTORS WHICH COULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE IN THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE TIME OF THE CONFERENCE:

(-A) BORGONOVO'S FATE - ALTHOUGH ONLY THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH HAVE GENERATED APPREHENSION AND SHOCK (SEE REFTEL B FOR MORE COMPLETE DESCRIPTION), THE KIDNAPPING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS RIVETED ATTENTION ON THE SECURITY SITUATION AND DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE MINISTER HAS BEEN MISSING FOR TEN DAYS. THERE IS NO SIGN OF AN IMMINENT BREAK IN THE CASE, WITH CONFLICTING EVIDENCE OF THE DIRECTION WHICH THE GOES PLANS TO TAKE IN RESPONSE TO THE KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS. THE FPL GROUP WHICH HOLDS BORGONOVO HAS DEMONSTRATED INTELLIGENCE AND COOLNESS IN HOW IT HANDLES ITSELF, THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERABLY LESS. THE MATTER COULD FOLLOW SEVERAL SCENARIOS BETWEEN NOW AND MAY 28.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 01968 01 OF 02 282339Z

THE WORST CASE SITUATION WOULD BE THE DEATH OF THE MINISTER AT THE HANDS OF HIS CAPTORS, PROVOKING AS IT WOULD OUTRAGE AND, MOST LIKELY, STRONG INCENTIVE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, ARMED FORCE AND VIGILANTE GROUPS TO GO ALL OUT TO CLEAN OUT TERRORISM. IT IS ALSO WELL WITHIN REASON THAT BORGONOVO WILL STILL BE MISSING A MONTH FROM NOW. IF HE IS, WE BELIEVE TENSIONS AND NERVOUSNESS WILL CLIMB DRAMATICALLY FROM THEIR ALREADY HIGH LEVEL. THE BEST THAT COULD

COME OF THIS CASE WOULD BE A QUICK AND CLEAN RESOLUTION, I.E., NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO HIS RELEASE. IN THAT SCENARIO, FALL OUT ON THE IDB MEETING ENVIRONMENT WOULD DEPEND ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS. IMPOSITION OF A TOTAL AND REPRESSIVE SEARCH FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE COULD RESULT IN A SITUATION ALMOST AS BAD AS THE MINISTER'S DEATH.

(B) STATE OF SIEGE - THE COUNTRY IS ABOUT TO ENTER A THIRD THIRTY-DAY PERIOD OF A STATE OF SIEGE IMPOSED ON MARCH 1 AS A RESULT OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSION CAUSED BY THE LATE FEBRUARY ELECTIONS. THE STATE OF SIEGE, BY SUSPENDING A NUMBER OF CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES, HAS IMPROVED THE GENERAL LAW AND ORDER ENVIRONMENT BY CURTAILING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, ASSEMBLY AND OTHERS.

(C) WANING DAYS OF MOLINA ADMINISTRATION - THE TRANSITION FROM MOLINA TO ROMERO IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 1. THE FACTORS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL (B) HAVE GENERATED SPECULATION THAT MOLINA "MIGHT NOT MAKE IT". ALL ACTS MOLINA TAKES BETWEEN NOW AND JULY SHOULD BE INTERPRETED IN TERMS OF HIS DETERMINATION TO FINISH HIS TERM.

(D) GOES PROMISE OF "TOTAL SECURITY" - IN A MEETING WITH THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO EXPLAIN THE BORGONOVO CASE (REFTEL C), THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE IDB MEETING AND SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE "ONE HUNDRED PERCENT TOTAL SECURITY" FOR THE VISITORS. MOLINA IS A MAN WHO LIKES TO POINT TO THE PROMISES HE HAS KEPT. WHAT HE CAN OFFER IN THE WAY OF PROTECTION COULD ONLY BE THE MANPOWER AND WEAPONRY OF THE SECURITY SERVICES SUPPORTED BY THE ARMY, WHOSE TROOPS AND OFFICERS HAVE LITTLE OR NO TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE IN PROVIDING SUCH SECURITY, AND THE IMPOSITION OF CONTROLS OVER ACCESS TO THE HOTELS AND MEETING PLACES. THEY WOULD BE HEAVILY ARMED. BECAUSE OF THE STATE OF SEIGE AND THE BORGONOVO CASE, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 01968 01 OF 02 282339Z

THE SECURITY SERVICES WILL BE ENGAGED IN ROADBLOCKS, CAR SEARCHES, AND DETENTION FOR IMPROPERLY DOCUMENTED OR OTHERWISE SUSPICIOUS PERSONS.

(E) THE US-ES BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP - RECENT EVENTS HAVE PRODUCED CONSIDERABLE PARANOIA IN THE GOES AND CERTAIN SECTORS THAT THE KSG AND US PRESS ARE OUT TO "GET" EL SALVADOR.

2. TURNING TO THE QUESTIONS POSED REFTEL, THE EMBASSY FINDS POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN ALL THREE AREAS. TAKING THEM IN ORDER:

(A) SECURITY - IT IS OUR BEST GUESS THAT THE VISITING DELEGATIONS AND OTHER VISITORS WILL NOT RPT NOT BE TARGETED FOR ACTS OF TERRORISM. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE FPL OR OTHER GROUPS HAVE HARASSED FOREIGNERS IN THE PAST. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE GOES HAS PROMISED TOTAL SECURITY. FOR THE NUMBER OF DELEGATES INVOLVED, SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CITY, THIS CAN ONLY BE ATTEMPTED BY DEPLOYING ALL AVAILABLE SECURITY PERSONNEL. THIS WILL NECESSITATE UTILIZATION OF YOUNG, UNTRAINED CONSCRIPTS, HEAVILY ARMED AND MOST LIKELY NERVOUS. WE SEE A GREATER THREAT EMANATING FROM AN ACCIDENT OR UNPREPARED-FOR-INCIDENT THAN FROM TERRORIST-PLANNED ACTS. A PRECEDENT FOR THE SECURITY PROBLEM OF

THE CONFERENCE EXISTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 01968 02 OF 02 282355Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----290011Z 038389 /14

O 282340Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4149

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 1968

EXDIS

IN 1975 THE GOES HOSTED THE MISS UNIVERSE CONTEST IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY GENERATED BY A THREAT FROM LEFTISTS TO DISRUPT THE CONTEST AND EMBARRASS THE GOES BEFORE WORLDWIDE TV AUDIENCE. THE GOES PROMISED "TOTAL SECURITY". THE HOTEL AND CONTEST EVENTS WERE SURROUNDED BY ARMED POLICE AND SOLDIERS. ILL-PREPARED SECURITY FORCES, TRYING TO FOLLOW WHAT THEY THOUGHT WERE STRICT INSTRUCTIONS, HASSLED JOURNALISTS AND OTHER VISITORS, AND A LARGE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OCCURRED. THAT EVENT BROUGHT SEVERAL HUNDRED VISITORS TO TWO SITES. IT PRESENTED ONE-TENTH THE COMPLEXITIES OF THIS MEETING. IN TERMS OF HOW PREPARED THE GOES SECURITY FORCES ARE FOR THE CONFERENCE, POLOFF SPOKE YESTERDAY TO THE THIRD RANKING OFFICER IN THE NATIONAL POLICE. HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE INVOLVED IN PROVIDING PROTECTION. ASKED HOW THINGS WERE GOING, THE OFFICER REVEALED THAT HE THOUGHT THE "BIG CONFERENCE" WAS SOME SIX MONTHS AWAY. HE SAID HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY PREPARATIONS TO DATE, SAYING THAT EVERYONE WAS BUSY ON THE BORGONOVO CASE. (B) HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS - PROSPECTS FOR PROVIDING SUITABLE LODGING FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 700 OFFICIAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER DELEGATES (300), IDB STAFF (200), OBSERVERS (60), PRESS (30), AND ACCOMPANYING WIVES (100 ESTIMATED), ARE REASONABLY GOOD PROVIDED DELEGATIONS ARE KEPT LEAN. ABOVE GROUPS HAVE BEEN ACCORDED PRIORITY IN ASSIGNMENT OF THE APPROXIMATELY 600 ROOMS IDB HAS CONTRACTED TO RESERVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, PROSPECTS ARE POOR FOR PROVIDING SUITABLE LODGING FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 500 SPECIAL GUESTS (MAINLY PRIVATE BANKERS), INASMUCH AS THE AVAILABILITY OF ROOMS OVER AND ABOVE THE 600 ALREADY RESERVED AND ASSIGNED DEPENDS UPON THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 01968 02 OF 02 282355Z

COMPLETION OF UP TO 334 ROOMS IN THE HOTEL PRESIDENTE (250) AND THE HOTEL SHERATON EXPANSION (84), BOTH CURRENTLY BEHIND SCHEDULE. MOREOVER, INASMUCH AS THE 334 NEW ROOMS CAN BE COMPLETED BY MAY 28 ONLY UNDER THE MOST IDEAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND SINCE SUCH FAVORABLE CONDITIONS HAVE NOT PREVAILED AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO PREVAIL (E.G., THE RAINY SEASON BEGAN LAST WEEK), PROSPECTS THAT ALL 334 WILL BE READY IN TIME ARE VIRTUALLY NIL.

(C) HUMAN RIGHTS - THIS IS THE AREA IN WHICH WE PERCEIVE THE GREATEST DANGER. GIVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT UPTIGHTNESS, THE RESULT OF THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND ITS SENSITIVITY TO OUTSIDE "INTERFERENCE"; THE POTENTIAL OF A "BAD END" TO THE BORGONOVO CASE; AND THE NATURE OF THE SECURITY FORCES; WE SEE A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL GO ALL OUT TO ENSURE NO UNPROFITOUS INCIDENTS. WE FORESEE PREVENTIVE DETENTIONS AND OTHER INTIMIDATION OF THOSE SECTORS THAT MIGHT CAUSE TROUBLE. SINCE THE FPL IS AN UNKNOWN ENTITY, AND MOST LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP IS IN EXILE OR HIDING, THE ROUNDUP WOULD PROBABLY INCLUDE ANYONE WHO IS ON ANYBODY'S LIST OF LEFTISTS AND TROUBLEMAKERS. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, ANYONE PICKED UP FOR INCIDENTS DURING THE CONFERENCE COULD EXPECT ROUGH, POSSIBLY ABUSIVE TREATMENT. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COULD OCCUR. IN THE MISS UNIVERSE CONTEST, WHEN THE SPOTLIGHT OF WORLD ATTENTION SHIFTED ELSEWHERE, THE SECURITY SERVICES EXPENDED THEIR PENT-UP FRUSTRATIONS ON THOSE WHO HAD HARASSED THEM FOR A TENSE WEEK BY CRACKING DOWN ON THE UNIVERSITY. THE RESULT WAS THE JULY 30, 1975 CONFRONTATION WITH A STUDENT MARCH THAT LEFT MANY DEAD AND MISSING.

3.FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, THE EMBASSY WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

(A) THE SECRETARY OF TREASURY SHOULD NOT RPT NOT HEAD THE DELEGATION. HIS PRESENCE COULD ONLY INCREASE THE RISK THAT THE FPL AND OTHERS CHANGE TACTICS AND TRY FOR A FOREIGNER. WE ALSO BELIEVE THE DANGER OF ACCIDENTAL MAYHEM IS GREAT ENOUGH TO WARRANT NOT SENDING A CABINET LEVEL CHIEF-OF-DELEGATION.

(B) THE SIZE OF THE US DELEGATION SHOULD BE KEPT TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM, BOTH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY REASONS. WE WOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT THE RGQHEL SALVADOR RELATION-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 01968 02 OF 02 282355Z

SHIP NOW IS STRAINED AND DELICATE. WE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEND AN INCORRECT SIGNAL. A LEAN DELEGATION WOULD MINIMIZE THE RISK.

(C) THE US DELEGATION SHOULD BE FULLY BRIEFED, NOT ONLY ON THE SECURITY THREAT, BUT ALSO ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND HOW THEIR ACTIONS AND CONTACTS WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT. WE RECOMMEND CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE EMBASSY, PARTICULARLY AS IT PERTAINS TO ATTENDANCE AT GOES SPONSORED FUNCTIONS.

(D) IF THERE IS ANY SENTIMENT AMONG OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO CANCEL, POSTPONE OR CHANGE SITES,

THE USG SHOULD CONSIDER SUPPORTING THAT POSITION.

5. SINCE THIS IS A RELATIVELY SMALL EMBASSY, WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE NOTIFICATION OF THE US DELEGATION COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT NEEDS SO THAT WE CAN BETTER PLAN FOR THE CONFERENCE(SEPTEL TO FOLLOW).

6. THE EMBASSY HAS JUST LEARNED THAT THE GOES HAS CANCELED ITS MAY 7 ARMED FORCE DAY CELEBRATION, A MASS PARADE AND MILITARY DEMONSTRATION,BECAUSE "OF THE PRESENT SITUATION", PRESUMABLY SECURITY FEARS OF TERRORIST ACTS.

LOZANO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANS01968
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770149-0365
Format: TEL
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977049/aaaaahch.tel
Line Count: 234
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b45f79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 93806, 77 SAN SALVADOR 1921, 77 SAN SALVADOR 1852
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2902726
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAN SALVADOR AS IDB MEETING SITE
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, PINS, PORG, ES, IDB
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b45f79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009